

A brief history of EHAP's* and OHA's**
Environmental Justice Activities at Portland Harbor
2002-2015

2002: ATSDR developed the Portland Harbor Public Health Assessment (PHA) and determined the most important exposure pathway at the site was consuming resident fish. The PHA report recommended that health education and risk communication plans be developed and implemented to inform people of their risk and how they could minimize it. Specifically, it was recommended that programs target the various ethnic groups and sport anglers that catch and consume fish from the lower Willamette River, and that input and cooperation from the targeted groups ensure maximum effectiveness.

ATSDR's Cooperative Agreement Program (the Environmental Health Assessment Program – or EHAP) conducted an extensive community outreach campaign in response to the recommendations made in the 2002 PHA, using a systematic health education process that included:

- Conducting a Needs Assessment: EHAP worked with the community to gather information about their health concerns, knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about exposure to Portland Harbor contaminants, and any practices or behaviors that place them at risk. This process included community questionnaires, informal surveying techniques, and talking with community leaders and members.
- Working with the community to prioritize needs, and included community recommendations in the development and implementation of a health education action plan.

2003-2009: Mini-grant application program

Collaborated with community organizations to enhance outreach efforts to different ethnic groups and specific populations that catch and consume fish from the Portland Harbor Superfund site. Community groups received funding from EHAP (SHINE) through a series of mini-grants, and developed health education materials in English, Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Laotian. In addition, there is a brochure and coloring book targeting tribal communities.

The mini-grants were designed to focus outreach efforts toward the communities fishing from the harbor, about which little was known. To increase the effectiveness of the fish advisory message, information about fish consumption was accurately tailored for each ethnic using approaches and terminology that was linguistically and culturally appropriate. The goal of the mini-grants was to: develop and implement culturally appropriate health education materials and outreach activities; motivate people to monitor their consumption of locally caught fish within the levels listed in advisories; help people select lesser-contaminated species of fish to eat; allow people to make personal, informed decisions about eating locally caught fish; maximize overall public health associated with appropriate nutritional choices that consider life circumstance; and reduce public health risks for at-risk populations.

2003-2004 Mini-Grant Awards:

Benson High School, Health Occupations Program

- Designed and distributed a variety of targeted health education presentations and materials, including brochures, presentations and posters, in collaboration with different community organizations.
- Informally surveyed Portland Harbor fishers on where and how often they fish, how often they eat the fish they catch, and preparation techniques.

*once known as the Superfund Health and Investigation and Education (SHINE) Program

**once known as the Department of Human Services (DHS)

Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians

- Hosted informational sessions with a panel of professionals for Siletz staff and members of the other five Tribes engaged in the Portland Harbor.
- Presented information and materials at regularly scheduled health education forums such as the monthly diabetes luncheon, *RezRobics for Couch Potato Skins*, *Circle of Life* gatherings, Mother's Day Teas and breastfeeding circles, as well as to the youth, children and parents enrolled in Tribal Head Start Programs, day cares, schools, and Project JOBS.

Linnton Community Center

- Located and made site visits to transient camps along the industrially/residentially-zoned, west riverbank of north Portland to disseminate materials, present health messages and informally survey river usage by this population.
- Engaged the Linnton community with health education activities, fillet demonstrations and materials targeted toward safer fish consumption and fish preparation from the harbor.

Asian Health & Service Center

- Published articles in locally Chinese newspapers.
- Organized and held three health education workshops targeting non-English speaking Chinese immigrants in different locations around Portland.

Asian Pacific American Consortium on Substance Abuse

- Hosted workshops on safer fish consumption with various Asian and Pacific Islander (API) groups on safer fish consumption, with an emphasis on recruiting API women.
- Invited children to participate in a "Healthy Fish Eating" poster contest.
- Published fish consumption health messages in newsletters/newspapers, broadcasted them monthly on the Portland Chinese Broadcast Radio Program and disseminated information and materials throughout the community.

In 2004:

EHAP designed, finalized and posted the Portland Harbor fish advisory signs, in several locations throughout the Superfund Site.

2004-2005 Mini-Grant Awards:

Immigrant Refugee Community Organization (IRCO)

- Created and implemented a Community-based Portland Harbor Fish Consumption Health Education Project to reduce and prevent exposure to contaminants from fish in the refugee and immigrant populations. Created a summary of refugee and immigrant communities' fishing behaviors and consumption information.
- Gave presentations on safe fish consumption practices that included information on the current fish advisory, healthy fish selection, who the populations are that are most at-risk, where the location of the Portland Harbor site is, and ways to prepare and clean fish in order to reduce exposure to toxins. Disseminated linguistically appropriate Portland Harbor fish consumption materials about the fish advisory to attendees at specific pre-employment trainings.

Oregon Bass and Panfish Club:

- Created and implemented a Community-based Portland Harbor Fish Consumption Health Education project to reduce and prevent exposure to contaminants from fish exposure in the sport fishermen and angler populations.
- Reached out to the sport fishermen and angler communities that catch and consume fish from the Portland Harbor on Hobart Mann's popular radio show during two live radio broadcasts by September 15, 2005. Dedicated time to talk about fish the proper selection, cleaning and cooking methods people can employ to reduce exposure to toxins from fish in the Portland Harbor as well as information on the fish advisory for the Portland Harbor.

Pat Wagner, Linnton Community Center

- Conducted a health education and outreach project targeting transient communities who eat contaminated fish caught within the Portland Harbor Superfund Site. After observing transient populations fishing along the banks of the river within the site boundary, the community center viewed this project as a unique opportunity to inform and educate this hard-to-reach population. Although the program was successful in reaching several houseless people, the community center chairman stated there is still a need for additional education to reach the ever-changing transient population living near, or fishing within the Portland Harbor Superfund Site.

2005-2006 Mini-Grant Awards

Asian Pacific American Senior Coalition (APASC)

- Created and implemented a Community-based Portland Harbor Fish Consumption Health Education Project to reduce and prevent exposure to contaminants from fish exposure in the Chinese, Burmese, Vietnamese, and Filipino communities. APASC implemented a number of health education activities for Asian communities in Portland regarding the reduction and prevention of exposure to contaminants from fish consumption.

Hispanos para Cristo

- Created and implemented a Community-based Portland Harbor Fish Consumption Health Education Project to reduce and prevent exposure to contaminants from fish exposure in the Latino population. Hispanos para Cristo implemented a number of health education activities for the Latino community regarding the reduction and prevention of exposure to contaminants from fish consumption per grant proposal submitted.

Catholic Charities (El Programa Hispano)

- Created and implemented a Community-based Portland Harbor Fish Consumption Health Education Project to reduce and prevent exposure to contaminants from fish exposure in the Latino population. Catholic Charities implemented a number of health education activities for the Latino community regarding the reduction and prevention of exposure to contaminants from fish consumption per grant proposal submitted.

Also in 2005-2006:

A Public Health Assessment (PHA) was released for public comment; EHAP responded to comments, and released final version. Outreach included factsheets, summaries, education and outreach activities and

implementation of a multi-level outreach program with tribal communities and governments who fish in Oregon's waters.

2005 also included seven presentations at community groups, to share information on the Harbor fish advisory. These presentations targeted specific groups of concern.

2006 also included:

- A collaboration with the City of Portland BES, to release a fish advisory on the Columbia Slough, and provided health education input on signage and outreach activities.
- 22 separate presentations at multiple events, targeting specific communities, to provide information and educational materials about the PHA, fish consumptions guidance (including alternatives for preparation and cooking).

2008-2010:

Developed the Recreational User PHA; conducted outreach to determine how people use the river; multiple outreach events and presentations followed the release, confirming fish continue to be the main public health concern from site-related contaminants.

2013:

Collaborated with EPA and the Willamette Riverkeepers to develop a new Portland Harbor sign – one that integrates EPA guidelines for using more pictures and a green-yellow-red, stoplight approach to fish consumption. Four new signs were posted at known popular fishing locations. Focus groups were held with seven interested community groups, including the Portland Harbor Community Advisory Group, the Portland Harbor Community Coalition, the Coalition of Black Men, members of the Russian community, the Latino Network, the NE coalition of Neighborhoods, and members of the Asian Health and Services Center. EHAP funded the printing of six additional signs, to be posted at locations TBD.

2014-2015:

Worked on occasion with the Portland Harbor Community Coalition (PHCC), presenting on the Portland Harbor fish advisory at PHCC sponsored outreach events, attended several monthly meetings to answer member questions about the Willamette Cove, and fish consumption in the Portland Harbor; provided feedback for Right 2 Survive's outreach materials (targeted toward the houseless population living along the Portland Harbor stretch of the Willamette River).

Held an inter-agency/ inter-state conference call with EPA Region 10 and Headquarters, ATSDR, Washington Department of Health, and King County Public Health to define the need for funding of fish advisory outreach and education at superfund sites, from the beginning of when a site is listed until the remedy is selected. Currently there is no funding mechanism for outreach and very little capacity at the state and local health department levels to fill this critical public health gap.

Revised, reprinted, translated and disseminated site-related materials for the Portland Harbor and Willamette Cove. Continued providing PH fish advisory information at outreach and educational events; represented public health and environmental justice interests at inter-agency meetings, conference calls, and on the EJ Task Force.